

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 DRC-01 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00

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R 121730Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5404

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 31737

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, FR, SU

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST LEADER TO VISIT USSR

1. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) FIRST SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND WILL LEAD A PS DELEGATION TO THE USSR. THE VISIT IS TO TAKE PLACE IN PRINCIPLE IN FEBRUARY 1974.

2. VISIT, IF IT DOES OCCUR, IS INTERESTING BOTH IN ITSELF AND BECAUSE OF ITS TIMING. SOVIETS HAVE MADE NO SECRET OF THEIR PAST DISLIKE AND DISTRUST OF MITTERRAND. INDEED, A MITTERRAND TRIP PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER 1972 WAS CANCELLED FOLLOWING A PUBLIC DISPUTE BETWEEN MITTERRAND AND THEN SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV OVER THE QUESTION OF JEWISH EMIGRATION. SINCE THEN, MITTERRAND HAS CONSOLIDATED HIS POSITION AS THE PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN OF THE "UNITED LEFT" PARTIES (PS, COMMUNISTS (PCF) AND LEFT RADICALS). WHILE PRESS REPORTS NOTE THAT VISIT ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWS TRIP BY A PS OFFICIAL TO MOSCOW (AND TRIPS BY MITTERRAND HIMSELF TO BELGRADE AND BUCHAREST)

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AND PRECEDED BY A VERY FEW DAYS THE OPENING OF A PS NATIONAL

CONGRESS, WE WONDER WHETHER RECENT VISIT OF PCF FIRST SECRETARY MARCHAIS TO MOSCOW MIGHT NOT ALSO HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. MITTERRAND'S VISIT WILL PRESUMABLY OCCUR IN ROUGHLY SAME TIME FRAME (FIRST QUARTER OF 1974) AS POMPIDOU'S TRIP TO THE USSR, WHICH CAN HARDLY BE WELCOME TO GOF. THE VISIT SEEMS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO PLAY BOTH SIDES OF THE STREET, I.E., CULTIVATING SIMULTANEOUSLY RELATIONS WITH THE GOF AND WITH THE OPPOSITION. SOVS MIGHT WISH TO TAKE THE MEASURE OF THE LEADING NON-COMMUNIST (THROUGH SOCIALIST) OPPOSITION LEADERS. PS LEADERSHIP PRESUMABLY FINDS VISIT USEFUL BECAUSE IT EXPANDS MITTERRAND'S KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES, ENABLES HIM TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH KREMLIN RATHER THAN THROUGH FILTER OF PCF, GIVES HIM PUBLICITY AS STATESMANLIKE FIGURE AND HELPS TO VALIDATE HIS CREDENTIALS WITH FRENCH COMMUNISTS AS SOMEONE BELONGING TO THE LEFT.
STONE

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